(b) if so, the details of the mandate proposed to be given to the said authority;

(c) the likely benefit to be derived from the operation of the said body; and

(d) by when, the said authority is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) to (d) The Prime Minister in his Independence Day Speech on 15th August, 2005 had announced the setting up a National Rainfed Area Authority to focus on the problems of farmers in the dry land areas to usher in a new green revolution. A Brainstorming meeting was held on 15th February, 2006 in the Planning Commission with eminent persons and Government Departments to discuss the structure, composition and functions of the National Rainfed Area Authority.

Policy on water management

1622. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formed a policy on water management with a view to preserve water resources in the country, both, for drinking and irrigation purposes; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) and (b) Separate policy on water management has not been framed by the Ministry of Water Resources. However, the National Water Policy (2002) addresses the water management issues, particularly in respect of preservation of water resources, both, for drinking and irrigation purposes.

Completion of irrigation projects in Andhra Pradesh

1623. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the names of various major, minor and medium irrigation projects under construction as on date in the tribal areas of various States, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, indicating the capacity, and estimated cost, cost escalation and time overrun, if any, project-wise; and

(b) the steps being taken to ensure timely completion of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) and (b) The selection of site for irrigation projects is governed by many natural and hydrological factors which *inter-alia* include resource availability. The regions/areas to be benefited by irrigation projects are mostly governed by the topographical features. In the water sector, especially for major and medium projects and to some extent smaller projects too, the projects cannot be customized to target identified populations and weaker sections as this will go against the principles of comprehensive and integrated planning, project viability and optimum utilization of scarce water resources. However, the command areas of major and medium projects, in general, cover the tribal areas as well.

Irrigation is a State subject and the planning, execution, funding, operation and maintenance of irrigation projects are primarily the responsibility of the State Governments based on their priorities. The Central Government has been providing Central Loan Assistance under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) since 1996-97 for such approved irrigation projects which are in an advanced stage of construction and beyond the resources capability of the States that can be completed in the next four financial years.

Erosion of river Ganga

1624. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 99 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 16th July, 2002 and state:

(a) the names of the short term works identified by Expenditure Finance Committee Memorandum which are to be completed by the Tenth Plan period; and

(b) what is the present status of those works?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) and (b) In continuation of the information furnished earlier the name and status of schemes for West Bengal, included in the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) "Critical anti erosion works in Ganga Basin States" during Tenth Plan is enclosed as Statement-I and II.